



Mohave Republican Forum

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer
Tuesday, March 9, 2010

Good evening!

I am delighted to be here – first, to thank you for your commitment and support for our Republican principles – and also to give you my perspective of where we’ve been and where we’re going.

Throughout my entire 28-year career as a trusted public servant – A State Legislator; a State Senator; a Maricopa County Supervisor; your Secretary of State and now as your Governor I have been committed to the principles of less government and more freedom.

I have been a consistent truth-teller.

When I inherited this office over one year ago, our State was on the brink of fiscal collapse.

So, what went wrong?

Wrong, is the five high-rolling years before I took office when the system grew government as large as possible.

Wrong, is a state budget deficit of nearly five billion dollars across two fiscal years.

Wrong, is a federal government whose unfunded mandates and sweetheart deals steal Arizona's freedom and threaten to bankrupt our state.

Wrong, is arguing that "the system worked" -- when evidence to the contrary is everywhere and obvious.

OK, so what's RIGHT?

Right, is having the courage to tell the hard truth -- even when it exacts a political cost.

Right, is having a proven track record of acting on behalf of others.

Right, is self-sacrifice ... commitment to the greater good.

Please know, I am working hard to resolve this present crisis.

And let me tell you what we've done so far:

We've made government more efficient, reducing spending by over one billion dollars.

We've streamlined agencies, shrinking the State work force by over ten percent.

We're now transferring back to the Federal Government all non-violent criminal aliens currently housed in the Arizona Department of Corrections.

We've attracted well over one billion dollars in capital -- and nearly two thousand jobs.

Recently, I welcomed Sun Tech holdings to Arizona, where they will build their hundred thousand-square-foot North American headquarters as well as a manufacturing plant creating over one hundred and fifty high paying jobs.

The economy has still not recovered, our revenues are still depressed and there is no avoiding the fact that going forward, we must make further, reductions in spending.

In short, more state jobs are going to be shed and services are going to be further curtailed, or lost.

Let me be clear, in the history of this state no other Governor has cut state government more than I have.

As I have stated for over a year, the depth of the problem is so severe that we cannot solve it through cuts alone.

The damage done to education, and public safety would be far too great.

So, in the short run – to prevent this -- we must raise some additional revenue.

So, I fought for – and won -- thanks to the help of courageous members of both parties in the State Senate and the State House – the right of the VOTERS to decide whether to raise the state sales tax by 1 percent over the next three years.

I've NEVER voted to raise taxes in my entire career.

Not once in 28 years in public service.

Not one time!

But, during that period, I've learned one thing above all else: Doing the RIGHT thing almost always means doing the HARD thing. That's how I feel about Proposition 100. As hard as it is to do, I will be a "YES" vote come Election Day.

If we are to preserve the core functions of the Arizona we all love, then Proposition 100 MUST pass.

Prop 100 will keep funding for Arizona's K-12 education system at reasonable levels, keeping students learning and class sizes manageable.

It will help our universities and community colleges.

It will go to keep felons locked up and it will go to give Arizona's poorest families the help they desperately need.

Without the revenue that a "YES" vote will bring, these programs MUST BE CUT BY MORE THAN ONE BILLION DOLLARS IMMEDIATELY!

That's why Prop 100 is the RIGHT thing to do.

This is a TEMPORARY tax – it will start on June 1st of this year, and come to a dead stop at the end of the day on May 31, 2013.

It will get us through until revenues recover, so that education does not bear the brunt of the downturn.

Please understand, though, that this isn't a cure-all. Despite the fact we've streamlined state government – there are more reductions to come.

We have tax reforms and an aggressive pro-growth job creation program that are ramping up, but still we need Prop 100.

So, please vote “YES” on Proposition 100.

I did not create this situation -- but I intend to resolve it -- and continue telling the people the truth about it.

Some of my opponents say that with State revenues at 2004 levels -- we should just adopt the 2004 budget.

But, what they DON'T tell you is critically important:

Since 2004, we have one hundred and forty thousand new students, eleven thousand new prisoners -- and four hundred and seventy-five thousand new Medicaid enrollees -- in addition to all of the mandated expenses they bring.

Making the best of the situation requires more than just political rhetoric.

It requires hard choices with tough consequences. If we keep our priorities straight, we will succeed.

In my most recent budget proposal to the State Legislature I proposed that:

- We reduce health care enrollment in our Health Care Cost Containment system by 25 percent, or 310,000 individuals**
- We eliminate the KidsCare program, which provides health coverage for nearly 47,000 children;**
- That we reduce services for 17,000 seriously mentally ill adults – approximately half of that population;**

- **That we eliminate cash assistance for 10,000 families;**
- **That we place hard caps on day care assistance and eliminate services for more than 10,000 children of low-income working parents;**
- **That we close the Department of Juvenile Corrections, transitioning the custody of minors to county detention centers and laying off an additional 900 State employees;**
- **That we reduce State employee pay by 5 percent; and,**
- **We redirect Lottery revenue streams into the general fund.**

All of these measures are intended to protect my budget priorities of maintaining education funding at or near 2006 levels.

Over the long run, I support a responsible pro-growth tax reform package that includes tax cuts.

However -- we must ensure a revenue base that supports vital functions through this downturn.

If we do not act decisively, we will look to the East -- and our Federal Government -- and see our future -- government over-grown -- people over-taxed -- borders over-run -- employers over a barrel -- and freedom ... simply over.

**Challenges arise to show us what we're made of
as women and men. They're tests of our
character. Tests of our values.**

My father died when I was 10.

**My mother raised two children, opened up a
business of her own and never quit.**

**My mother met every challenge that came her
way ...**

I am my mother's daughter.

I will never quit.

I will never give in.

I love this state and I care about the people of Arizona ... enough to always tell you the truth.

I am committed to an Arizona revival equal to her spirit -- equal to the promise of her second century.

I am committed to a government that is limited in scope but unrestrained in its goodness.

That is what is expected of all of us.

And, that is exactly what we will do ... Together.

Thank you, may God bless you and your families, and may God bless Arizona.